

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As Members of Congress with an interest in the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers and streams that feed it, we thank the Subcommittee for its legacy of leadership with respect to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Chesapeake Bay states are heavily invested in implementing a Blueprint designed to restore this national treasure. Federal partnership to support this complex, cross-state effort is key to their success. To maintain the trust and collaboration of state partners, we have identified essential programs in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Interior in fiscal year 2019. We urge the Subcommittee to include level funding for these programs in the Interior bill this year.

States in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have been working together to restore this national treasure since 1983, when Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania signed the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement -- a voluntary, regional partnership to achieve the states' vision of an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay Watershed. That same year, Congress established the Chesapeake Bay Program to support this agreement. As a testament to the value of this federal-state partnership, all watershed states signed the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Under this Agreement, states and federal agencies have voluntarily committed to work together to restore water quality in the Bay by 2025. We must maintain federal investment in the programs below to support state efforts and ensure their success.

**Chesapeake Bay Program (CWA §117)**

This program was created under President Ronald Reagan to support the voluntary Chesapeake Bay Agreement. It is a unique regional partnership that brings together leaders and experts from a vast range of agencies and organizations. Each Bay Program partner uses its own resources to implement Bay restoration and protections activities. Federal Bay Program funds are used to coordinate the complex **cross-state** science, research, modeling, monitoring, data collection, and other activities essential to support Partners' collaboration. Over 60% of federal funds go to states, primarily through grants programs that leverage private investment for restoration activities. Within this account, we support set-aside funding for Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants.

### **STAG/Clean Water State Revolving Fund**

The CWSRF is an important, flexible financing program that provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for the water quality infrastructure projects critical to Agreement success.

### **STAG/Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (CWA §319)**

Nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Section 319(h) grants are available to locate and partially finance the agricultural, urban, and residential best management practices (BMPs) planned pursuant to the Agreement and to leverage other local and private funding sources. States also independently provide project management and technical assistance to local stakeholders to install these practices.

### **STAG/Pollution Control Grants (CWA §106)**

These grants help states in the Bay watershed manage the federal water pollution permit program, or NPDES. Under the Clean Water Act, it is unlawful to discharge any pollutant into US waters without a NPDES permit. Without sufficient funding, this permit process gets bogged down, resulting in business losses and reduced permit monitoring and enforcement.

### **Department of Interior USGS Chesapeake Bay Program Activities**

The US Geologic Survey (USGS) conducts the watershed-wide research, assessment, monitoring, and modeling that helps Chesapeake Bay partners make informed management decisions to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. This data and analysis are critical for Federal, State, and academic science partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program to plan the best stewardship of natural resources and taxpayer dollars. USGS Chesapeake Bay Program activities are conducted under five Mission Areas and appropriations accounts: Ecosystems, Water, Environmental Health, Climate Change and Land Use, and Core Science Systems. The total crosscut of Bay activities within these programs is approximately \$12.5M.

### **Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps to protect large-scale landscapes throughout the Bay watershed. This fund provides significant support to the Agreement goal of conserving an additional 2 million acres of land by 2025 and increasing the impact of existing conservation efforts.

Chesapeake Bay States have invested significant resources into restoring a national treasure. In fact, state investments continue to dwarf federal investments as OMB reported to Congress in the Chesapeake Cross-cut Budget in October 2017. To maintain the spirit of trust and collaboration that is the hallmark of this successful federal-state partnership, it is essential to maintain consistent federal support for this effort. The Chesapeake Bay is showing great improvement. We thank you for supporting this essential partnership with Bay states in an extraordinary effort to restore our national treasure for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

  
John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress






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Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



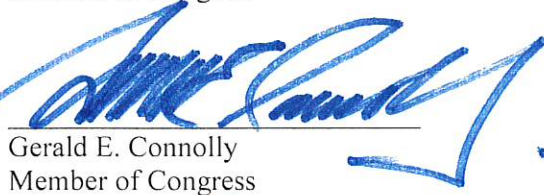
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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress




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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



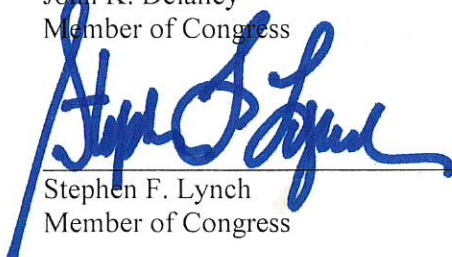
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Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress




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John K. Delaney  
Member of Congress



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Stephen F. Lynch  
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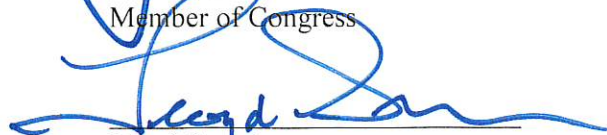
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A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



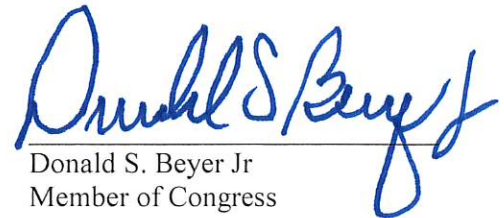
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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